



SENATOR

Rosemary McAuliffe

E-Newsletter - 1st District, Bothell

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1st Legislative District

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Dear Neighbors,

We are now finishing the third week of the legislative session. The current funding crisis has created an atmosphere in Olympia that feels like the work of a 4 month session is being crammed into this short sixty day session. Legislators, staff, stakeholders and beyond are working to find the best solution to the current budget shortfall. We are doing everything we can to prevent further erosion of protection to our basic values: quality schools, affordable healthcare, a safety net for the most vulnerable, affordable housing, public safety and a clean environment.

The first major step toward this happened last Friday with the passage of two early action bills that address state workers compensation. I look forward to updating you on this and the governor request bill I am sponsoring that positions Washington to qualify for federal Race to the Top education funding.

As these efforts continue, I look forward to updating you.

And as always please contact me with any ideas you may have to address our budget crisis.

Sincerely,

Rosemary McAuliffe
State Senator

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Senate passes Early Actions Savings bills

Last Friday, working with the House, the Senate took a major early step to reduce the state's budget shortfall by passing two bills to pare \$69 million in payroll from the state budget and limit increases in the future.

Last year, we froze salaries for non-union state employees but the freeze is set to expire this February. We plan to extend it to 2011.

We're also asking state agencies to reduce their overall compensation costs by 5 percent, while minimizing the impact on lower-paid employees by asking more from higher-paid employees. This could include closing agencies one day a month over 13 months, resulting in temporary layoffs for employees.

We believe state workers understand we're all in this together and that the recession requires shared sacrifice. This month, we saw state unemployment increase from 9 to 9.5 percent due to cuts in construction jobs and public employees. Many of us have already heard from state workers who'd prefer a single-digit-percentage pay cut to a 100-percent pay cut. We agree. That's our plan.

These steps will help us avoid adding to our state's unemployment picture; preserve the essential public services that our communities depend on; and allow the state to reduce costs in a time of crisis.

Our early action will save us \$69 million total. The House's plan will save \$47 million. That's \$116 million straight out of the gate. Of course, these early actions won't solve the entire budget problem, but they are prudent moves to reap savings as quickly as possible. They are just the first of many solutions to come in the weeks ahead. From here, we will continue to pursue a coordinated, multi-step process to bring the state's budget into balance.

Education reform bill positions Washington for federal Race to the Top money

As chair of the K-12 Education Committee, I recently introduced the Governor request bill that could bring federal education funding to Washington.

Senate Bill 6696 would institute education reforms necessary to qualify for Race to the Top (RTTT) funds. President Obama created RTTT to give states the incentive to compete for federal funds to pay for education reforms. The challenge's purpose is to reward past accomplishments and incentivize future improvements.

We must do everything we can to position ourselves to qualify for the federal Race to the Top funding because more funding moves us that much closer to providing learning opportunities for all students.

Reforms promoted by RTTT will help:

- Encourage accountability of low performing schools and creates new state authority for turning those schools around
- Close achievement gaps
- Support quality evaluation of teachers and principals in our classrooms and schools
- Focus on development of new Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives
- Strengthens parent and community involvement
- Work towards goals set forth last year in House Bill 2261 while simultaneously positioning Washington to secure federal RTTT funding